Our Political Needs.

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" At certain periods in the history of a people," said Cobden, " it becomes necessary to review its principles of domestic policy for the purpose of adapting the Government to the changing and improving conditions of the people." Such a period has now arrived in our history. There is a general feeling that we have outgrown our system of administration, however suitable and useful it may have been in the past.

We are a " Crown Colony," which is defined in the *Colonial Office List* as one " not possessing responsible Government and in which the administration is carried on by public officers under the control of the Secretary of State for the Colonies." His control is nominal. He is among the busiest of the King's ministers. Not to speak of Parliamentary duties, the concerns of a vast Colonial Empire, with its varied, intricate and delicate problems, especially in connection with the self-governing Colonies; now grown so imperious and touchy, leave him little time or opportunity to think of so insignificant a dot as Ceylon, except when sensational events occur, such as those of 1915. Recognizing the inherent difficulty of governing us from a distance of 7,000 miles under these conditions, he entrusts the administration to a carefully selected officer and gives him a free hand.

In the House of Commons discussion last August on the events of 1915, the Secretary of State, Mr. Bonar Law, said: " You cannot really control the Government out there except on general

principles........... We must trust in these cases largely to the character of the men who represent the British Government." As to "general principles," I am not aware of any public declaration of the Secretary of State beyond such commonplaces as he uttered in the House of Commons: "We have always made it a rule that those who govern a country should first look to the interest of the country they govern and not to the interest of the mother country." Ceylon is, in this respect, in marked contrast to India, where the lines of policy are from time to time laid down by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State and sometimes even by the Sovereign in person.

We are thus practically under a benevolent despotism wielded by a Governor who is responsible only to Downing Street; and he exercises his powers through a bureaucracy predominantly European. The Governor changes about once in five or six years, of late oftener. There is no settled policy for him to follow, and therefore no continuity of policy. Each Governor makes a policy for himself. He generally spends the first year of his administration looking round and studying local matters and conditions with the help of his Executive Council and heads of departments. He prepares a programme and sends it to Downing Street for sanction. Having got it, he subordinates everything to his programme and carries it through the Legislative Council with the help of an official majority. What is left of his programme generally goes by the board, for his successor has his own policy and programme.

The Governor is often blamed for being so autocratic. But the critics forget that the assumption underlying the whole system of our administration is that we are children unable to judge for ourselves and that he is *in loco parentis*. Having conscientiously decided on what is good for us and having only a short time to see it through, he would be shirking his duty if he allowed himself to be turned from his purpose by the ignorant criticism of "children." It is for us to show that we are grown up and are competent and determined to have a say in the management of our affairs.

We have certainly made great strides, materially and morally, under this system. How great, may be seen from a comparison

of the Blue Book figures, say, for 1834 (the first year of the establishment of the Legislative Council) with those of 1915, the latest year for which figures are available.

Year.	Population.	Revenue.	Expenditure.	Imports.	Exports.	Tonnage Entered and Cleared.	Schools.	Scholars.
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Tons.		
1834	1,167,700	* 3,779,520	* 3,348,350	* 3,727,260	* 1,458,340	153,510	1,105	13,891
1915	4,106,350	51,545,472	† 50,148,001	‡ 168,446,038	273,377,180	§ 10,524,897	4,303	384,533

For this progress we have to thank a long succession of good Governors and public servants and educationists (official and unofficial), and the capacity of our people to make good use of opportunities. But while we have changed, our system of administration has not changed. We are still, as we were over a hundred years ago, a Crown Colony and have little scope or opportunity for the management of our affairs. In some respects, of late years, we have been distinctly stagnating, if not retrograding. The last two years have shown how little we could do to avert disastrous mistakes on the part of Government—mistakes which His Excellency Sir John Anderson is laboriously endeavouring to repair by wise and sympathetic rule—and how much the British officials, who are the eyes and ears of the Governor, have got out of touch with the people. Ceylon, the pride of the Colonial Office as a model administration, has become discredited; and an administrator and thinker of the distinction of Sir Harry Johnston is, in spite of his official predilections, obliged to speak of "our rich but somewhat misgoverned dependency of Ceylon."**

* At two shillings to the rupee.

† Actually Rs. 53,578,015, including expenditure from loan funds and from revenue pending loan.

‡ In 1913, the year before the war, 199,640,797 rupees.

§ In 1913, 16,126,254 tons.

** "India and Imperial Federation" in the *New Statesman*, by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

With the increasing complexity of the administration, the concentration of all power in the hands of the officials and the demands on their time and labour, the best of them can only keep pace with the day's work and are unable to look around or ahead. Important questions affecting our permanent welfare are inevitably neglected. Urgent measures of public safety take their time. Colombo, one of the world's great ports, is ill provided with means to help ships in distress. The city is a nest of foul slums and misery and the abode of plague and tuberculosis. Malaria, which modern science has shown can be mastered, claims its victims throughout the Island by tens of thousands. The conditions of labour are a scandal. While every civilized State is grappling boldly with drink and putting it down, here its clutch is growing tighter and its baneful influence more wide-spread.

A large proportion of our population is without the opportunities of even elementary instruction. As much as 73·6% of the population is illiterate, and in the case of females 89·4%. The percentage of illiteracy is in some provinces as high as 98 for women and 85 for both sexes.* Even in our capital city there is total lack of provision for the masses. About 12,000 children are left to shift for themselves, many wandering wild in the streets. Those who have worked in the few night schools in the city and seen the bright, intelligent faces and the yearning for knowledge in the starved bodies of our poor children, wring their hands over the utter neglect and waste of such splendid capacities. Higher education—money spent on which Mr. Joseph Chamberlain declared to be "the best of all possible national investments"—is in as sorry a plight. After twelve decades of British rule we have got no further than secondary schools, which under the high-sounding name of Colleges hide the poverty of our educational equipment. The University College, which Sir Henry McCallum decided upon and which was to be the preparation for a Ceylon University, is still in the distant future. An Indian State like Mysore, administered exclusively by Indians and having

* Ceylon Census Report, 1911, pp. 401 and 403, Tables A. and B.

scarcely half the revenue of Ceylon, has its own university. There is something in our atmosphere which necessitates a more than ordinarily long period of gestation for such schemes. Meanwhile, successive generations of our youth, deprived of the opportunities of education during the formative years of life, pass into the adult population with irremediably stunted powers and narrowed outlooks, adversely affecting the whole quality of the national life.

As to industrial or scientific training, the thing scarcely exists. Our enforced ignorance closes the scientific departments of Government to us in large measure. Far worse, it makes us useless to our country for the development of her industrial and agricultural resources. We are exploited by European nations, and now also by Japan and America. We have become their milch-cow. Much of our wealth goes abroad. What is left imparts an air of prosperity to the professional and commercial classes. The real makers of the country's wealth—the peasant and the labourer—are steeped in poverty. The big capitalist and landowner are growing bigger. The small farmer, the *goiya*, who was the glory of Ceylon, is fast becoming a landless vagabond and hireling,—this race of whom Robert Knox, after living among them twenty years, said that the ordinary ploughman had the elegant speech and the elegant manner of the courtier.

Of what other people in the world could this be said? Wide-spread and deep-rooted must have been the national culture, unlike the culture of modern nations, which seldom penetrates beneath the upper levels of society. "Take a ploughman from the plough, wash off his dirt, and he is fit to rule a kingdom," is the peasants' saying which Knox quotes. What superb self-confidence! What height might not such a people attain under the leadership of statesmen moving with the times! Then the Tamils who, with a civilisation going back to the days when they traded with Babylon and Egypt, have still some of the ancient vigour and keenness, and have largely contributed to the material and moral well-being of Ceylon; the Burghers whose example and influence have been invaluable in acclimatising western knowledge and methods in the Island, and who have produced the

greatest of our leaders and patriots, Charles Lorenz; the Moors with their simple, hardy lives and commercial aptitudes; and the Malay with his military instincts;—what might not be done with such peoples under a proper system of education ?

By a properly organized system of education our resources could be immensely developed. This has been done in agriculture by a small country like Denmark, and in industry as well as agriculture by another small country, Switzerland. A Swiss statesman said: "Most of our children are born in poverty, but we take care that they shall not grow up in ignorance." With a population smaller than Ceylon, Switzerland spends more pounds sterling than we spend rupees on education, which is admirably organized from her primary schools to the seven universities which attract students from all the world. The agricultural college at Copenhagen receives a yearly grant from the State of three and a half lakhs of rupees, and there are twenty-one other agricultural schools for an agricultural population half that of Ceylon, to supply whose needs we have but one small school of recent date at Peradeniya. Switzerland and Denmark have by education so made up for the poverty of their natural resources that their trade is greater per head than that of Great Britain, being respectively £23.4s. and £33 against £22.16s. for Great Britain,* and a paltry 14 shillings for Ceylon. If it was but £14 per head, what prosperity and strength would be ours and at the service of Great Britain!

Take again Irrigation, a subject of vital importance to the vast majority of our population. Throughout twenty-four centuries rice cultivation was the principal concern of King and people and among the noblest of callings. Kings themselves drove the plough. To construct and maintain tanks and water-courses were deemed the wisest and most beneficent acts of a good ruler. "The plougher is the linch-pin of the world," says Tiru-valluvar; again, "however it whirl, the world followeth still the plougher's team."† The French have a saying, "Pauvres paysans, pauvre royaume." Sismondi asked, when people were

* *Whitaker's Almanack*, 1917, p. 107.

† Again, "Kingdoms many under the shade of his throne he will see, whose fields are shaded by the waving corn,"—which modern industrial nations may take to heart.

extolling the wonderful developments of manufacture and commerce in Europe last century, " What have you done with the peasants ?" Having neglected agriculture, Britain to-day, in spite of her immense industrial and commercial wealth and power, finds in that neglect the chief source of her weakness and anxiety. Irrigation received earnest and sympathetic attention from some Governors—notably Sir Henry Ward, Sir William Gregory, Sir Arthur Gordon, Sir West Ridgeway. They recognized the duty of the State to provide facilities for the hundreds of thousands of persons dependent on agriculture and the necessity for growing our own food as of old and reducing our dependence on India. But for some years past there has been a change of policy, unnoticed by the public or its leaders. An expert was imported from India at great expense, and after elaborate inquiries made a report which is understood to have been exhaustive and to disclose serious defects in the administration. The Report was never published. A Bill is now before the Legislative Council. It has taken nearly a decade to hatch, but shows little appreciation of the needs and conditions of agriculture. What a new day for Ceylon there might be, if we could but hope for such a Minister as Denmark found in her dark hour after the war of 1866 in Cla Hansen! Himself a peasant farmer bedding his own cows each night after his ministerial duties were done and one of the greatest experts in Europe in cattle breeding and scientific milk-farming, he organized that splendid scheme of agricultural education and of co-operation among the working farmers and between them and the national railway, canal and banking systems, which has made that little country what Lord Selborne called it the other day, " the leader of agriculture in the world."

Good or bad, when the Government have once made up their minds on a measure, it can scarcely help passing unchanged in essence through the Legislative Council owing to the official majority in it, the very small elective element, and the ineffectiveness of the majority of the nominated members. The Legislative Council, as at present constituted, hardly answers a useful purpose. It provides, no doubt, seats of honour to a few unofficials and an arena for their eloquence or for their silence. But they are little

more than advisory members, and their presence on this Council, as in lesser bodies—Municipal Councils, Local Boards, &c.,—serves to conceal the autocracy under which we live. Without the unofficial element and the semblance of popular representation, the sole responsibility of the officials would be patent. They would be more keenly alive to it; so would the Secretary of State, and he could hold them more strictly to account.

But the inherent defects of a Crown Colony administration will remain. It answers well enough so long as you have only to police a country, collect taxes, make roads, administer justice, &c. But much more is needed if Ceylon is to be a self-reliant, self-respecting unit in the British Empire. Tied as we are to the apron strings of a bureaucracy and deprived of all power and responsibility, our powers and capacities are dwarfed and stunted, we live in an atmosphere of inferiority, and we can never rise to the full height to which our manhood is capable of rising. We have hypnotised ourselves into thinking that we are weak and inferior. No greater disaster can overtake a people. We must regain our self-confidence. We must feel that nothing can daunt us.

The swaddling-clothes of a Crown Colony administration are strangling us. They have begun even to disturb the equanimity of our European fellow-subjects. Engrossed each in his business, looking forward to frequent trips home and to the time when the dust of Ceylon will be shaken off their feet, they ignored the duty ever present to earlier generations of their countrymen under the inspiration and leadership of such men as George Wall, remained indifferent to their responsibilities as citizens of Ceylon, and were rather pleased to see the Ceylonese "kept in his place." But "none are safe until all are safe."

The discontent of our European friends is of good omen for the future, for we need their co-operation in reforming the administration. Its continuance is inconsistent with the great traditions of England. It is in having to do things that one learns how to do them, and develops a sense of duty in regard to them. Denied the opportunity of training in governing ourselves even in the smallest matters, we are told that we are unfit for anything

better than a paternal despotism. But time after time England has shown in her own history, as in her dealings with dependent peoples, her staunch faith in the healing and ennobling power of popular institutions and has found in them the only sure remedy for the ills of the body politic.

Hon'ble Mr. Sri Nivasa Sastri, member of the Supreme Legislative Council of India and worthy successor of Mr. Gokhale in the office of President of the Servants of India Society, has done well in drawing prominent attention to this in his recent publication, *Self-government for India under the British Flag.* He has shown, for example, from official publications, how the French Canadians, at a stage of development, when according to every criterion now applied to India and Ceylon they were unfit for popular institutions, were on the advice of a far-sighted statesman granted full responsible Government. Hear what Lord Durham says about their condition at the time: "The continued negligence of the British Government left the mass of the people without any of the institutions which would have elevated them in freedom and civilisation." "It is impossible to exaggerate the want of education among the inhabitants. They are almost entirely destitute of the qualifications even of reading and writing." "They possess neither municipal institutions nor popular initiative. Accustomed to rely entirely upon Government, they have no power to do anything for themselves, much less to aid the central authority." "They have made little advance beyond the first progress in comfort which the bounty of the soil absolutely forced on them; under the same institutions they remained the same uninstructed, inactive and unprogressive people." "I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state. I found a struggle not of principles, but of races."

It was to such a people, and after they had risen in armed rebellion, that not merely representative institutions but responsible Government was given. Eleven years afterwards, in 1849, the British Canadians had so little reconciled themselves to the change that, when a bill was passed giving compensation to innocent sufferers from the rebellion, the most violent opposition was organized, the Governor-General who gave his assent to the

bill was insulted, and the Parliament House at Montreal was burnt down. But the faith of Britain in responsible government as the solution of Colonial administration did not falter. It has been amply justified and rewarded. To-day Canada is among the most loyal, prosperous and progressive of His Majesty's dominions and a tower of strength in this terrible war. Like happy results have followed from a like policy in the Australian Colonies. The success of the policy has been even more marked in South Africa, where the Boer, who fought the British fifteen years ago, is now fighting in defence of the British Empire.

The liberalising of our administration, therefore, in the direction of a representative and responsible Government and of giving the people a real and effective share in the administration of the country, is in the best interests of Ceylon no less than of the Empire. But a bureaucracy is slow to part with power, especially when it believes itself to be exercising that power for good; slow also to believe that its wards have come of age. Nor can we expect hard-worked officials to think out these matters for us and to grant us these boons unasked*. It is for us to meet and deliberate, to formulate a scheme, and to work strenuously and earnestly for its realization.

Circumstances have arisen which make it of the utmost importance that we should do so without delay. Now that the war is happily drawing to a close and in an assured victory for the cause of our Sovereign, great changes in the political constitution of the Empire are on the point of being made which will affect us vitally. It is our duty as well as our interest to submit our views

* Mr. H. A. L. Fisher (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield and now Minister of Education in England) says: "It may be questioned whether a life spent in the Indian Civil Service is calculated, except in rare cases, to stimulate that prevision of political talent which consists in the study and guidance of political opinion or in the framing of large legislative measures from time to time needed in actively thinking political communities."

Nor are our officials encouraged to think beyond the task of the day. I have known men who worked out big schemes of far-reaching usefulness and spent years in trying to convert successive Governors and Colonial Secretaries, and when at last they were won over and even legislative sanction obtained, the accident of a change of Governor or Colonial Secretary has hurled the structure to the ground and brought to nought the labour of perhaps two decades.

to the Imperial Government in time. Silence or delay may prove disastrous, and it may be our lot to exchange the benevolent, if sleepy, rule of Downing Street for the domination of the self-governing colonies, to have the stamp of an inferior race branded on our forehead, and to be the victims of their ignorant prejudice and selfish greed.

In India vast numbers of the people have shown themselves alive to their duties and responsibilities as citizens and to the needs of the hour. By public discussion, by meetings and congresses, by memorials, by deputations to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, by permanent agencies in England, India has set an example and has achieved results which should rouse us from our apathy. Thanks to a well-organized and sustained campaign and to the wisdom of British statesmen, the Legislative Councils of India, which were established thirty years after ours, have been so improved that they are largely elective and contain in every Legislative Council, except the Supreme Council of the Viceroy, an unofficial majority. The Executive Councils of the Viceroy and of the various Governors of Presidencies, and even the Council of the Secretary of State, contain one or more unofficial members. The country is dotted with Municipalities and other local bodies, urban and rural, mostly elective and presided over by unofficial Chairmen. The administration is amenable and sensitive to public opinion to a degree unknown in Ceylon. Yet India is not satisfied, and the National Indian Congress and the All-India Muslim League have joined in the demand presented to the Viceroy by nineteen members of his Council for a further extension of power, in order to secure "not merely good Government or efficient administration, but Government that is acceptable to the people because it is responsible to them," and to make India occupy "a position not of subordination but of comradeship with England."

In Ceylon the Legislative Council contains a permanent official majority. Only four out of ten unofficial members are elected. Of the four two represent the Europeans, who are a small minority of our population and whose interests should be safe enough in the hands of the twelve official members who are

all Europeans. There is not a single unofficial in the Executive Council. A seat in a Council of the Secretary of State has been beyond our wildest dreams. Municipalities were first established in Ceylon in 1865, in Colombo, Kandy and Galle. Though half a century has passed, neither their number nor their powers have been increased. The Councils remain practically departments of Government administered by officials of the Civil Service, with Councillors who have little more than consultative powers; while the city of Bombay, with many times the population and revenue of Colombo, has for years had an elected Chairman and fifty-six elected to sixteen members (official and unofficial) nominated by Government. Local Boards, established in 1876, remain equally ineffective for the purpose of training people in the art of managing their affairs, and still more the Sanitary Boards established under the Ordinance 18 of 1892. The ancient system of Village Councils was revived in 1871 with the declared intention of restoring to the people the administration of village affairs. But so little has this intention been carried out, that the elective system provided for by law has become a farce, elections are seldom notified, and the councillors are usually nominees of the District Mudaliyar and carry out his orders. On the judicial side these councils have been allowed to degenerate into petty police courts without their safeguards, and the idea of the village court has so far been lost sight of that the proceedings are recorded in English, a language unknown to the suitors.

There has thus been no real attempt to train the people in self-government, and we have fallen far behind even India*. A bitter commentary on the expectations of the Royal Commissioners on whose recommendation our political and judicial system was organized in 1833: " The peculiar circumstances of Ceylon, both physical and moral, seem to point it out to the British Government as the fittest spot in our eastern dominions in which

* In point of literacy the population of Ceylon is ahead of India. At the Census of 1911 the proportion of literates per 1,000 in Ceylon was for males 404 against 106 in India; and for females 106 in Ceylon against 10 in India (Ceylon Census Report, 1911, p. 423, Table M.). Not much for us to boast of, our population is so small, 4¼ millions against over 300 in India.

to plant the germ of European civilisation, whence we may not unreasonably hope that it will hereafter spread over the whole of those vast territories.''*

There is, however, no lack of criticism of our incapacity and want of initiative, very much as the Canadians were criticised and condemned in the last century. Yet the Blue Book figures quoted above, and facts patent to every unprejudiced person, show that we are fitter for representative institutions than Canada was at the time she was granted responsible Government. If the Philippines with a heterogeneous population (Malay, Chinese, Spanish, Negro and hybrid; Mohammedan, Christian, Buddhist and animist; tree-dweller, head-hunter and cannibal), a population neglected through three centuries of Spanish misrule, can be so elevated by the rule of the United States as to be fit within a decade for an Upper House of eight Commissioners (four Americans and four Philippinos) under the presidency of the American Governor-General and a Legislative Assembly of eighty-one elected members, an elected Governor for each of its thirty-eight Provinces, and elected Presidents and Councillors for its 730 towns—an administration changed last October, within another decade, to full self-government with promise of independence in the near future—, to say that Ceylon, the home of an ancient civilisation, is after more than a hundred years of British rule fit for nothing better than a Crown Colony administration is absurd and, if true, would be discreditable to the British administration. But it is not true.

Most of the reform schemes and discussions that I have seen begin and end with the Legislative Council. This, no doubt, is important, as also the reform of the Executive Council. But of far greater importance is the improvement of the rural and urban administration. A thorough reform of this system will enable us to share in the actual administration of the country and to train our people to self-government on a wider scale. Our Village Committees, of which there are now about three hundred, should be increased in number and spread far and wide over the Island.

* Report of Royal Commissioners, 31st January, 1832, page 274 of Ramanathan's Law Reports, 1820-1833.

They should be elective in fact as they are in name, and should share with the District Mudaliyar, and later have exclusive control of, the administration of the village affairs—schools and sanitation, roads and canals, irrigation, agriculture, fisheries, etc. The village headman should not be a nominee of the Mudaliyar or the Government Agent but should be elected by the villagers, as they were found to be even so late as 1831 by the Royal Commissioners, who recommended the continuance of this old custom and that the office should be subject to renewal every three years.* The Assistant Government Agent should have a District Council, mostly elected, to share with him the administration of all matters affecting his district and to absorb the functions which now dissipate the energies of Road Committees, Education and Excise Committees and other bodies and of the Police, Excise, Irrigation, Postal and other departments. The Government Agent should have a similar Provincial Council for all matters affecting the province, until in due course the administration is transferred to Provincial and District Councils presided over by elected officers.

The Municipalities and Local Boards should have, as usual in India, an elected majority and elected Chairmen, and should have their own Bench of magistrates to deal with municipal and local offences. The Sanitary Boards, of which there are about a hundred and containing only nominees of Government, should be multiplied and consist mainly of elected members and have elected Chairmen. As the Government of India said in their Resolution of 18th May, 1882: "There appears to the Governor-General in Council to be great force in the argument that so long as the chief Executive Officers are, as a matter of course, Chairmen of the Municipal and District Committees, there is little chance of these Committees affording any effective training to their members in the management of local affairs, or of the non-official members taking any real interest in local business. The non-official members must be led to feel that real power is placed in their hands and that they have real responsibility to discharge. It is doubtful whether they have, under the present arrangement, any

* *Ibid*, pp. 227-8.

sufficient inducement to give up their time and attention to the transaction of public business."* "The true principle to be followed," in the opinion of the Government of India, "is that the control should be exercised from without rather than from within."†

Extension of local self-government on these lines will be a valuable education to the people. It would give every man a share in the power, which under our native sovereigns he had, of guidance over the things which he understands, beginning with the small and simple interests of his village, and would train him anew in habits of co-operation for public purposes and in Western methods. It would find an outlet for energies now wasted among the masses in idleness, or misused in feuds and litigation, drink and crime. It would enlist in the service of the community and turn to good account the intelligence and public spirit of the large educated class whom it is bad policy as well as sheer waste of power not to utilize. It would lighten the growing burden of administration on British officials and stop the clamour for increased establishments. It would provide Government Agents and Assistant Government Agents (until, as in the Philippines, they are replaced by elected officers) with trustworthy channels of information and advice other than the headmen. It would check the notorious abuses of the Headman system, the odium of which falls on Government in spite of all its efforts to grapple with them—a Sisyphean labour. It would rescue the efficient Civil Servant from the pitiful drudgery which wastes his abilities, narrows his outlook and cripples his usefulness. It would leave him time and opportunity to consider and devise large measures of public policy and to carry them out with the co-operation of the people, no longer an autocrat and task-master, but in the finer rôle of guide, colleague and friend. It would convert idle spectators and carping critics of the administration into men with interest in and responsibility for good government and

* Resolution of the Governor-General in Council, during the Viceroyalty of the Marquis of Ripon, on Local Self-government, 1882: *Indian Constitution*, by A. Rangaswamy Aiyangar, Appendix, p. cxiii., para. 18.

† *Ibid.* p. cxii., para. 17.

with experience of its difficulties, would promote self-confidence and self-respect, breathe new life into the people and gain for them dignity at home and abroad.

The local administration will thus be greatly improved and benefited. Even if at first there is no improvement, and even though mistakes will be committed, it must be remembered that only through such mistakes can experience be gained and progress made, while no serious harm can result, as the central authority will retain the power to interfere in cases of gross abuse. "It is not primarily," says the Government of India, "with a view to improvement in administration that this measure (of local self-government) is put forward and supported. It is chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education. His Excellency in Council has himself no doubt that in course of time, as local knowledge and local interest are brought to bear more freely upon local administration, improved efficiency will in fact follow. But, at starting, there will doubtless be many failures, calculated to discourage exaggerated hopes and even in some cases to cast apparent discredit upon the practice of self-government itself. If, however, the officers of Government only set themselves, as the Governor-General in Council believes they will, to foster sedulously the small beginnings of independent political life; if they accept loyally and as their own the policy of the Government and if they come to realize that the system really opens to them a fairer field for the exercise of administrative tact and directive energy than the more autocratic system which it supersedes, then it may be hoped that the period of failures will be short, and that real and substantial progress will very soon become manifest."*

The chief concern of the local administration should be the spread, far and wide, of education, for it is the root of national life and progress. Education should be free, both elementary and secondary, vernacular and English, industrial and scientific. There is a great deal of lee-way to be made up. Instead of a paltry four or five per cent. of our revenue we must spend at least thirty

* *Ibid*, p. cvii., para. 5.

per cent., as the Philippine Government has done. An American administrator, explaining the policy of the United States in the Philippines, said: "We stake our whole job on the education of the people."* Let us take the United States, Japan,† France and (among the smaller states) Scotland,‡ Switzerland and Denmark for our model, and organize a system of education that shall, from the primary school to the University, be within the reach of every child. This vital question will, I am convinced, never be solved until the administration is in our hands.

With local self-government properly developed we should, in the course of a few years, have all over the Island men conversant with the details of rural and urban life and experienced in administration and able to take their part efficiently in the bigger affairs of government that are dealt with by the Executive and Legislative Councils. Side by side with the improvement of local administration, we must reform these Councils too, having

* The actual expenditure on education in the Philippines is seven million dollars out of a revenue of twenty-two million dollars or 31·8 per cent. The expenditure in the U. S. A. itself is 20 per cent. of the State revenue and 80 per cent. of the local taxation. The rate of illiteracy in the U. S. A. is 7·7 per cent., inclusive of Negroes and immigrants.

† Japan has in 40 years reduced her rate of illiteracy to zero, the whole of her child population of six and a half millions, male and female, between 6 and 14 years being under instruction in over 26,000 schools. For secondary and higher education there are 303 middle schools, 177 high girls' schools, 78 normal schools, 5,682 special and technical schools, 3,128 other schools, and four Universities. The Tokyo University (says the English scientific journal, *Nature*, envious of the opportunities enjoyed by Japanese students), a generation ago a high-class school, is now (July 1915) a highly organised University where scientific research lives and thrives. It consists of six colleges—law, medicine, engineering, literature, science, agriculture; employs close on 400 professors, assistant professors and lecturers. Among the science professors are included 4 in mathematics, 3 physics, 2 theoretical physics, 4 chemistry, 3 geology, 3 botany, 2 geology, 1 each in mineralogy, geography, seismology, anthropology. The Technological Institute in Tokyo is probably without a rival in the world.

‡ In Scotland, which is the best educated portion of the British Isles, education, elementary and secondary, is so widespread and higher education so well provided for, that one boy in four goes to the University. No wonder that, in every part of the Empire, Scotsmen hold a position quite out of proportion to their population. Education is taken more seriously in Scotland than England. The Bishop of Birmingham, speaking some time ago in the House of Lords, deplored the fact that Oxford and Cambridge were far too much merely plutocratic playgrounds. "The plain and present fact," said Mr. G. K. Chesterton commenting on the Bishop's statement, "is that our upper classes regard the University as a lark." It is interesting to note, as evidence of educational keenness in a self-governing Colony, that the State of Western Australia has an absolutely free University at Perth, probably the only free University in the Empire.

for our goal a time, not, I hope, far distant, when we shall have the fullest control over the affairs of Ceylon within the Empire, have the same powers and privileges as Australia, Canada or little Newfoundland, and like them take our place in an Imperial scheme of federation as comrades, not dependents, of Great Britain.

We ought to have at once a large increase in the number of elected members of the Legislative Council. While the general principle should be local representation, there must be adequate safeguards for minorities. The Burghers, for example, the Europeans and the Mohammedans should have special electorates. Municipalities, Local and Sanitary Boards, Provincial and District Councils should have their elected representatives, also the commercial and planting interests and the learned professions. The Governor should, for some time, have the power of nominating a limited number of unofficials to represent interests that may be left unrepresented at the elections. But the elected members should have a clear majority. As the Secretary of State for India said in the House of Lords, when explaining his reason for dispensing with the official majority: "An official majority directly, palpably and injuriously tends to deaden the interest and responsibility of non-official members."

The Executive Council should include two unofficials. An old colonist, Mr. John Ferguson, in his *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year* says: "The farce has been seen even in recent years of a Governor and his five Executive advisors in Ceylon not counting half a dozen years of local experience between them." That great Governor, Sir West Ridgeway, saw the danger of it. In May 1903 he recommended to the Secretary of State the appointment of two unofficials to the Executive Council, as "tending to satisfy public opinion which is in favour of more effective representation in the government of the Colony," and as "it would formally place at the disposal of the Government advice and information which it is not always possible to obtain from official sources." He was overruled by the Secretary of State. How invaluable would such information and advice have been in May and June 1915! Two members have, indeed, been added to the Executive

Council since Sir West Ridgeway's time, but both officials. The addition has not improved the Council, but rather the reverse. The additional members are the chief administrative officers in the Island, whose acts it is the duty of the Council to supervise and sit in judgment on.

The details of the constitution and franchise of the new Legislative Council will have to be worked out. At present there are twenty-one members, besides the presiding Governor: in all 12 officials and 10 un-officials, of whom 4 are elected and 6 nominees of the Governor. I should be disposed to raise the whole number to at least thirty-two, of whom eighteen to be elected and fourteen nominated (11 officials and 3 unofficials). Nothing is gained by increasing the number of officials. It was my experience when I was an official member of the Legislative Council, and it is the experience of others, that attendance at the Council interfered with our duties as heads of Departments. It is hardly seemly and almost humiliating to be there mainly to say ditto to the spokesman of Government. A certain number of official members must, no doubt, be on the Council to serve on Committees and help the Government and the unofficial members with information, advice, etc. But this number should be reduced to a minimum to avoid the dislocation of public business outside the Council. Other officers can always be consulted at will without their having seats in the Council. An official majority is not indispensable to Government. The Secretary of State for India said in his Despatch of 27th November, 1908: "With a Council representing divergent interests and realizing, together with its increased powers, greater responsibility, a combination of all the non-official members to resist a measure proposed by Government would be unlikely, and some non-officials at least would probably cast their votes on the side of Government. If, however, a combination of all the non-official members against the Government were to occur, that might be a very good reason for thinking that the proposed measure was really open to objection and should not be proceeded with."* Should the non-official majority press

* Lord Morley's Despatch of 27th November, 1908. (p. LXXXVII. of Appendix to A. Rangasamy Aiyangar's *Indian Constitution*.)

legislation of a character disapproved by Government, the Secretary of State was of opinion that it should be met by the exercise of the power to withhold assent possessed by the head of the Government.

I would further, in accordance with the recommendation of the Royal Commission of 1831, provide that the Governor should take no part in the deliberations of the Council. Free discussion is, as the Commission anticipated and as experience has shown, impeded by his presence, especially as the great majority of the members owe their appointments and their continuance therein to him. When the discussion is free, it sometimes puts him in an awkward position. Mr. William Digby in his *Forty Years in a Crown Colony* (Volume II., page 189) says: "It is lowering to the dignity of the Queen's representative to take part in the often rough give-and-take style of oratory of such institutions. Mixing in petty matters the Viceregal office is not raised in esteem. Governors are but men, and they naturally take much interest in measures for which they are responsible. Among the traditions of the present House (1875) is one which tells of a Governor, highly offended at persistent opposition to a Government Bill, deliberately turning his chair round and sitting with his back to an honourable Member during the whole time that he was speaking. Further, the same President became very wroth, broke the rules of the House in regard to the Bill, and was only restored to his wonted composure by asking the senior member temporarily to occupy the Chair, while he went to one of the open windows and watched some military sports being carried out on a *maidan* near." In the last House (1912) an unofficial member came in conflict with the Governor and was nearly expelled.

The reform of the Civil Service is no less urgent. It should be recruited on the judicial side almost exclusively from the Bar. Competent men should be selected by a Board on which the judges of the Supreme Court have a predominant voice, and, having served a period of probation, should be drafted permanently into the service with prospects of rising to the highest class. The highest judicial and legal appointments, including the Chief Justiceship and the Attorney Generalship, should be open as a

matter of course to the leaders of the Bar and the existing barriers of race-prejudice swept away. On the administrative side the facilities for the admission and advancement of the Ceylonese should be greatly extended. Throughout the public service efficiency and character should be the tests. The employment of Europeans should gradually be reduced to cases of clear necessity. Only Europeans of outstanding ability and merit should be appointed, and they should be well paid. Men like the late Chief Justice Sir John Phear and the late Sir Alexander Ashmore and Mr. F. C. Fisher of the Civil Service were worth to the Island double and treble their pay.

"In countries like India and Egypt," says that great administrator whom the Empire has just lost, Earl Cromer, in *Modern Egypt*, "the best policy to pursue is to employ a small body of well-selected and well-paid Europeans. Everything depends on finding the right man for the right place. If he can be found, it is worth while to pay him well. It is a mistake to employ second or third-rate Europeans on low salaries. They often do more harm than good." In India and Ceylon second and third-rate Europeans are employed, on salaries by no means low, in posts many of which can be quite as efficiently, if not more efficiently, filled by indigenous talent. These countries have long ceased to attract first class men except occasionally. Where there is free competition, as in the professions of law and medicine, Indians and Ceylonese have easily distanced European rivals. In the Bar of the Presidency towns of India as well as of Colombo European barristers are few and far between; in Madras and Calcutta they are rare even in the highest legal offices. In the medical profession Ceylon has produced men of European reputation, and there is scarcely a European physician or surgeon here or in India who commands the confidence and prestige that the best of our doctors do. In the Civil Service itself many Ceylonese have, in spite of heavy handicaps, gained distinction. If they have not done so in the purely technical departments, it is mainly because they have been denied the opportunity. The Government should give them every facility of training (if necessary, abroad) in order to qualify themselves and, as vacancies

arise, should replace Europeans by Ceylonese. Any other policy would savour of the spirit of that M. P. who was so little in harmony with British ideals and traditions as to maintain that India (and the Crown Colonies) existed mainly to provide markets for British goods and places for British boys.

The number of high appointments held by Ceylonese is lamentably low. Of 44 appointments in the Civil Service of the annual value of £900 to £2,000, only three are held by Ceylonese (including Burghers), a proportion of barely 7 per cent., the highest among them drawing £1,150. (I take the figures throughout from the *Ceylon Civil List*, 1916). In the Treasury, out of three officers (£400 to £700)—leaving out the Treasurer who is a European Civil Servant—not one is a Ceylonese; nor in the Audit office out of three officers (£500 to £1,000). In the Public Works Department, out of 10 Provincial Engineers only one is a Ceylonese; of the 12 officers in the Headquarter's Staff and Government Factory (£300 to £1,400), not one is a Ceylonese. Among the District Engineers (£300 to £600), 19 out of 60 are Ceylonese. In the Survey Department, which during the 117 years of its existence has for some occult reason been a European sanctuary, out of 21 appointments of the value of £500 to £1,200 not one is held by a Ceylonese; of 10 Assistant Superintendents (£300 to £500), but 2 are Ceylonese; and—a striking proof of the persistence of a bad policy—out of 18 probationers (£300 to £325) not one is a Ceylonese. The Forest Department and the Irrigation Department, though of recent origin, follow the very bad example of the Survey Department. Out of 11 appointments in the Forest Department (£350 to £1,100) and 21 appointments in the Irrigation Department (£300 to £1,200), not one is held by a Ceylonese. Of the 11 former offices five are held by Europeans, locally selected and after some years' service sent abroad to be trained at the public expense. Why our own youths should not have been given these facilities, is a mystery. In the Railway Department out of 14 officers (£500 to £1,400), not one is a Ceylonese; out of 18 officers (£300 to £400), two are Ceylonese. In the Police Department, out of five officers (£550 to £1,200) only one is a Ceylonese; and of 16 officers (£350 to £500) four. Seven others—all Europeans—

are shown as temporarily appointed (£225 to £800), and among these is one of the officers laboriously trained for the Forest Department at public expense. The Police authorities are apparently not satisfied. Recently they have been issuing more invitations to European planters to offer themselves for appointments. In the Postal and Telegraph Department, out of 13 appointments of the value of £300 to £900 (other than the Postmaster-General who is a European Civil Servant) only 4 of the lower appointments are held by Ceylonese. It is superfluous to go on to other departments. Enough has been said to show the extent to which Ceylonese are excluded from the higher appointments. One has only to go over the way to Mysore, a great Indian state administered from top to bottom by Indians, to see that the administration has not gone to rack and ruin by the pursuit of a different policy. On the contrary, you will find the administration highly efficient, You will see an enlightened ruler working through Indian ministers in the highest offices, through provincial Governors with jurisdiction and responsibility at least as large as our Civil Servants', with engineers executing works not less important than in Ceylon, and every department run by Indians.

This is not a question of loaves and fishes. A just distribution of places of honour and emolument in the community is the mark of a wise ruler, as by satisfying legitimate ambitions it largely contributes to the contentment of the people. We claim the right to take full part and to gain full experience in every branch of the administration. The experience and knowledge gained in the higher branches of the public service is carried away by every retiring European official and is absolutely lost to Ceylon to its great detriment, its administration being perpetually in the hands of new-comers. If the Ceylonese were largely employed in the higher posts in all departments, an accumulating wealth of precious experience would remain in the Island and bear fruit in the training of younger generations, in the counselling of the powers that be, in the guiding of public discussions and measures, in the maintenance of a continuity of policy, and generally in the advancement of good Government. What would the administration

of Great Britain be like if, say, all its experienced officers over the age of fifty-five were sent away from the country and the administration was left in the hands of a perpetually shifting generation of new men? What, if those men were strangers to the country, knew the English language but slightly, knew less of English history and traditions, kept aloof from the people except during business hours, felt themselves in exile while they lived in England, and looked forward to furlough at frequent intervals and to quitting the scene of their labours for good at the earliest pensionable age?

Unless we have at once an effective share in and control of the administration, I see no prospect of quickening its snail-like progress and of securing early the numerous measures vital to our welfare. While we claim to exercise the rights and duties of British citizenship, we should bear in mind that the fundamental requirement of that citizenship is the right and duty of fighting in defence of our King and Country. We should deem it a high privilege to do so, nor indeed can national character be duly developed except by the discharge of the duty. We ought therefore to welcome compulsory military service in the Island, and to demand that we should be trained for it, so that Ceylon might no longer be dependent on English or Indian regiments for its defence. It is many years since a British regiment was stationed here. The last Indian regiment has made way for our own volunteers. British or Indian regiments will be less and less available with the increasing strain of Empire on Great Britain. Nor is it right that we should add to her burdens by our helplessness. The splendid stand that the Sinhalese made against Europeans for three centuries, until they voluntarily surrendered the Island to the British Sovereign with full reservation of their rights and liberties, is matter of history. The Tamils formed the bulk of the army which helped Lord Clive to conquer India. Though, like the Sinhalese, they have been obliged to turn to peaceful pursuits, Tamils drawn from the class of rickshaw-wallas and coolies have fought splendidly in the present war, as the *Ceylon Times* recently pointed out.

In regard also to the defence of our seas, which has of late had to be shared with Japan, we must give relief to England by seeking

service in the navy and qualifying ourselves. When the Indian ocean was infested by the Arabs, then sharing the maritime supremacy of the world with Venice, Ibn Batuta, travelling from Tangiers, found (1347 A.D.) the Ceylon seas protected by the navy of Arya Chakravarti of Jaffna, under whose protection he made his pilgrimage to Adam's Peak and travelled over a great part of Ceylon. Sixty years later another king of that line sent a great army by sea and land against Kotte and Gampola. Two centuries earlier Parakrama Bahu the Great not only held the command of the sea, but carried his victorious standards to South India, Siam and Cambodia. With proper training in modern methods our men will prove no less effective for the present and future defence of Ceylon. Japan has shown that, given equal opportunity, Asiatics are in no way inferior to Europeans in any branch of human activity, civil, military, or naval, scientific, industrial or commercial.

Our immediate concern, however, is with the civil administration. I have given in bare outline the reforms which I submit for your consideration as worthy of your immediate attention. But to achieve success we must be prepared to work strenuously and systematically. It is not enough to hold spasmodic meetings, make long speeches and go to sleep. Let us have a minimum of talk and maximum of action, action well weighed and resolutely persisted in. Let us have an earnest body of men to form a "Ceylon Reform League," with a good working Secretary and Committee, a competent staff, a central office, a reading room and library and a place for us to meet daily and exchange thoughts and help to maintain each other's enthusiasm. This central office should be the brain of an organization extending over the Island and by means of branches and affiliated societies in every town and district, by means of lectures and publications, carrying on a propaganda for educating the people in their rights and duties as citizens. We shall need competent agents in England to keep the claims and needs of Ceylon before the British Government and public. All this requires money as well as zeal. It will be necessary to raise a fund to which, I trust, our wealthy men will make liberal contributions. There should be a

subscription of, say, Rs. 10 a month to meet current expenses which will be heavy. Persons able and willing to help the cause by personal service, but unable to pay this subscription, might be admitted by the Committee as members on reduced subscription or without subscription during such service.

Work, work, work must be our motto, work on constitutional lines, with loyalty to our Sovereign, with disciplined efficiency, tenacity and enthusiasm. On us alone depends success or failure. Nobody else can help us. Think of what Japan has achieved. The whole system of Government and administration of Japan was revolutionized by 32 young men—no more. They held aloft new national ideals and broke the conceptions of control derived from the days of chain armour. They were all obscure, without official rank, social distinction or influence. Our task is lighter, because, in spite of the vagaries of officials here and there, England is a free nation—no nation greater and nobler than she in her age-long assertion of liberty, no warmer champion of small nations, to her fugitives of liberty all over the world have come and found an asylum—all her traditions, ideals and instincts, her imperial policy declared through responsible statesmen and the Sovereign himself, are on our side. We have only to convince her that we are in earnest, and our wishes will be granted. But let us lose no time. The Imperial Federation scheme will soon be under discussion, and our fate may be decided before many months are over. If we organize at once and submit our views in time, we must succeed, for the moment is propitious. Should we fail to get all we want, that will be a spur and an incitement to us to renewed and more intense effort until we reach our goal.

Meanwhile, I would like to recall to our British fellow-subjects, official and unofficial, the words of a great Englishman breathing the true English spirit. Macaulay said of India, and every word of his applies to Ceylon:—" We are free, we are civilized, to little purpose, if we grudge to any portion of the human race an equal measure of freedom and civilization. Are we to keep the people of India ignorant in order that we may keep them submissive? Or do we think that we can give them knowledge without awakening ambition? Or do we mean to awaken

ambition and to provide it with no legitimate vent? Who will answer any of these questions in the affirmative?............. The path of duty is plain before us, and it is also the path of wisdom, of national prosperity, of national honour." "It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown the system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that, having become instructed in European knowledge, they may in some future age demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come, I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or to retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history. The sceptre may pass away from us. Unforeseen accidents may derange our most profound schemes of policy. Victory may be inconstant to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverses. There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay. These triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism, that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws."

That the same spirit animates British statesmen still, is clear from the address of Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, on the occasion of a farewell dinner given him by the United Services at the United Service Club, Simla:—"England has instilled into this country the culture and civilization of the West with all its ideals of liberty and self-respect. It is not enough for her now to consider only the material outlook of India. It is necessary for her to cherish the aspirations of which she has herself sown the seed, and the English officials are gradually awakening to the fact that, high as were the aims and remarkable the achievements of their predecessors, a still nobler task lies before them in the present and the future in guiding the uncertain and faltering steps of Indian development along sure and safe paths. The new rôle of guide, philosopher and friend is opening before you, and it is worthy of your greatest efforts. It requires in you gifts of imagination and sympathy and imposes upon you self-sacrifice, for it means that slowly but surely you must divest yourselves of some of the power you have hitherto wielded. Let it be realised that

great as has been England's mission in the past, she has a far more glorious task to fulfil in the future in encouraging and guiding the political self-development of the people. The goal to which India may attain is still distant and there may be many vicissitudes in her path, but I look forward with confidence to a time when, strengthened by character and self-respect and bound by ties of affection and gratitude, India may be regarded as a true friend of the Empire and not merely as a trusty dependent. The day for the complete fulfilment of this ideal is not yet, but it is to this distant vista that the British official should turn his eyes, and he must grasp the fact that it is by his future success in this direction that British prestige and efficiency will be judged."

May this spirit guide and animate our own officials! However, let us have the courage of our conviction—courage which Plutarch defined as "being resolutely minded in a just cause." When we know what we want and desire it determinedly and work for it strenuously, we must obtain our object. We seek to help in the realization of the conception of the British realm as a sisterhood of free nations. We ask to be in our own country what other self-respecting peoples are in theirs—self-governing, strong, respected at home and abroad; and we ask for the grant at once of a definite measure of progressive advance towards that goal. Ceylon is no pauper begging for alms. She is claiming her heritage. The unity and solidarity of the Empire itself will become a real, living fact when it is based on and derives its strength from the most complete local autonomy and respect for the rights and privileges of all its subjects.

The London *Times*, in the course of a leading article reviewing Lord Hardinge's Viceroyalty, said last April: "Lord Hardinge, speaking at Madras in November, 1913, of the treatment of Indian emigrants in South Africa and of their passive resistance to laws which they considered invidious and unjust said, 'In all this they have the sympathy of India—deep and burning—and not only of India, but of all those who like myself, without being Indians themselves, have feelings of sympathy for the people of this country.' He touched the hearts of the people and thenceforth they trusted him implicitly. Other Viceroys had fought for

the financial and administrative rights of India, but here was a Viceroy who was willing to champion in all sincerity the rights of the people themselves. A great new principle lags behind this simple speech. Whatever form the relations between Great Britain and India may eventually assume, it is reasonably certain that future Viceroys and future Governments of India must more and more identify themselves with Indian interests, even though they seem to conflict at times with the policy of the Home Government. They must be truly Indian Governments, which implies some change of spirit and outward attitude. It also implies a gradual lessening of Whitehall control. The whole secret of his great influence is that it was instinctively felt that he was the forerunner of some such change."

So do we in Ceylon desire that our Government shall be a Ceylonese Government, that our rulers shall identify themselves entirely with Ceylonese interests and in the striking words of the *Mahâwansa* "be one with the people."

P. ARUNACHALAM.

Colombo,
2nd April, 1917.